

St Mary's Parish Concord

3rd Sunday of Advent

Year C

12 December 2021

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-18
Daughter of Zion, the Lord will rejoice over you with gladness.

RESPONSORIAL CANTICLE: Isaiah 12
R: Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7
The Lord is close at hand.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:10-18
The crowds asked, "What should we do?"

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray that all world leaders will work together to develop policies to care for the environment.

We pray that our parish community will always be a place of safety for children and all vulnerable members of the community.

We pray for all health care worker and those who continue to work to protect the community.

We pray for Brian Condon, Angelo Adamo and all those who have died recently. We pray for Francesca Piazza, Paola Brancatisano, Maria Amelia Fraga, Elias Boumelhem, Carmelina DeMasi, Vincenzina DeMasi, Francesco Franze, Jack Munday, Fr Luke Newington and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time and all our deceased relatives and friends.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

No Bookings Required

CHRISTMAS EVE

Friday 24 December

6.00 pm Vigil Mass for Christmas

9.00 pm Mass during the Night

Please note there is NO MASS at 12.00 Midnight

CHRISTMAS DAY

Saturday 25 December

Masses at 7.30 am, 9.30 am and 11.00 am

NO EVENING MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

SUNDAY 26 DECEMBER

THE HOLY FAMILY

Masses 9.30 am and 6.00 pm

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (RECONCILIATION)

Saturday from 5.00 pm to 5.30 pm.

The last opportunity for the 1st Rite (individual) Reconciliation at St Marys Concord before Christmas will be Saturday 18 December

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Wangal people of the Eora nation as the traditional custodians of this land

THE ADVENT WREATH

The *third* candle, called the Shepherd's candle, recalls the shepherds who came to worship the newborn Jesus. The rose color of the candle reflects the theme of joy on this Sunday as we prepare for Christ's coming in glory.

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

Response: Come and lead us to the eternal life you promise.

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd who knows his flock and calls each one by name.

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd who searches for the lost sheep.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Masses have resumed, restrictions still apply. Please see the revised NSW Government restrictions: www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/rules

All people may attend Masses. All pews are now available but please continue to observe social distancing. **Face masks must be worn.**

For Weddings, Funerals and Memorial Masses, the "2 sqm rule" still applies and all attending must be fully vaccinated.

•Attendees must check-in using the Service NSW App or by clearly recording their name and contact details on the form provided by the Parish.

•Hand sanitiser is available at church entrances.

•Everyone must wear a mask, except when reading, presiding or singing.

•Congregational singing is not permitted; a socially distanced choir of up to 10 fully vaccinated people is allowed.

The revised numbers for Funerals, Memorial Services and Weddings only apply if everyone attending is **fully vaccinated**. If even one person present is unvaccinated, the former restrictions apply.

See the parish website for more details.

**PLEASE GET VACCINATED
to protect all those most at risk.**

LIGHTS OF CHRISTMAS St Mary's Cathedral Forecourt from 9 to 25 December. Join in Sydney's favourite free Christmas tradition, uniting families, locals and tourists with a display of digital storytelling projected onto St Mary's Cathedral. Light show 8.30 to 11.00 pm. Choirs from 7.30 pm. COVID Health restrictions are in place. To enter the site you will need to scan the QR code and show proof of vaccination or proof of a medical exception. For more details go to: <https://lightsofchristmas.com.au/>

THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS APPEAL The Concord Conference of the SVdP Society thank you for your support of the Christmas Appeal. Donations given to the Appeal are 100% tax deductible. Please complete all details on the envelopes if you require a receipt. Cash donations to support the SVdP conference may be placed in the SVdP boxes in the wall near the doors of the church at any time.

Are you struggling in this time of crisis? Depression. Anxiety. Loneliness. Conflict. Stress. CatholicCare offer a free and confidential helpline for counselling, relationships, parenting, ageing, disabilities, addictions and mental health. For help finding help, call CCareline on 13 18 19

ADVENT – WAITING IN HOPE



The Season of Advent opens the Church's liturgical year. The English word "advent" comes from the Latin *adventus* and literally means "coming". In pagan Rome "adventus" was the word for the celebration of the anniversary of the coming of the Emperor.

The early Christians took over the term and used it for the time of preparation for Christmas when they celebrated the first coming of Christ. That remains the focus of the last week of Advent.

However, the season begins by looking to the future, not to Christmas but to the second coming of Christ in glory. In that sense the first weeks of Advent continue the focus of the last Sunday of the Church's year, the feast of Christ the King.

By the end of the fourth century, as the Christmas season became established in Spain and Gaul, Advent emerged as a time of preparation for those who were to be baptized on the feast of the Epiphany and so it came to be seen as a "second Lent".

At one time it extended for 40 days from the feast of St Martin (11 November) to the Epiphany (6 January) leading to the popular name of "St Martin's Lent".

The traditional use of purple or violet vestments recalls that connection with Lent. But Advent is not a penitential season. At St Mary's, we distinguish the different seasons by using a blue-purple for Advent and red-purple for Lent.

In Rome the season of Advent did not become established until the middle of the sixth century. By then the link with preparation for Baptism had diminished as had the earlier penitential practices. Pope Gregory the Great (591-604) reduced Advent to four Sundays to make a clear distinction between Advent and Lent.

In Advent we continue to use Alleluia as our Gospel acclamation but the *Gloria* is not said or sung. It is omitted so that may resound with greater freshness at Christmas.

Popular devotions such as the Advent wreath give a focus to our waiting in hope for the coming of Christ.

Paul Crowley

ST MARY'S SCHOOL NEWS: Ms Anna Marsella will be leaving St Mary's School at the end of this school year after nine years as principal. The parish community will have the opportunity to thank Anna at the 9.30 am Mass next Sunday, 19 December. Anna was also farewelled by the school at the closing School Mass last Friday. Because of COVID restrictions the school Mass was livestreamed on the parish YouTube channel and the parish Facebook page. In 2022 we will welcome Ms Elizabeth Pisano as the new principal of St Mary's School.

SUPPORTING THE PARISH

Thank you to all who have continued to support the parish in these difficult times. Some parishioners have already opted to make a regular donation electronically. For more details please email the parish office.

Donations can also be made via the parish website. Go to the SUPPORT US button at the top right of the Home Page. A drop-down menu offers various options.

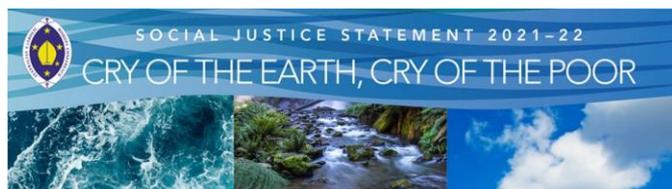
PARISH COMMUNITY AFTER COVID

The Parish Pastoral Council is currently reflecting on *Go Make Disciples*, the Mission Plan for the Archdiocese of Sydney. Their aim is to set our goals for the future. One of the foundation areas of the Mission Plan is Community.

Many of the things that we took for granted in the past still cannot happen. We still cannot gather as a community for the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday.

As we reopen, we need to rebuild our teams of volunteers, such as those who previously took Holy Communion to the sick at home or in Aged Care facilities.

Many of our volunteers are senior members of our community and face their own health issues. **We particularly need younger members of the parish to become more involved. Can you help?** Contact Fr Paul at the Parish Office for more details.



The Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, invites us to join in responding to Pope Francis' invitation to take a seven-year journey towards total ecological sustainability.

For more information go to the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace, www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

THE JOURNEY: Journey Catholic Radio is a weekly radio program and podcast developed by the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong all about faith, hope, love and life. It includes awesome music, a weekly Gospel reflection, interviews and a variety of weekly inputs from some of the best Catholic presenters in Australia.

Journey Catholic Radio is hosted by the director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, Mr Jude Hennessy and produced by Mr Max Norden. For information about how to listen and subscribe go to <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/journey-radio/>

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN: The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Safeguarding Office provides support and training for parish communities to ensure that our communities offer a safe and caring environment. The Safeguarding Office also provides support for those who have suffered abuse. If you or a person close to you has been abused by someone working or ministering within the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Safeguarding Office will listen to you respectfully, offer support and discuss the options you have available to you. Please contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office on phone: 9390 5812.

VOTIVE CANDLES A long Christian tradition has linked lighting a candle to prayers of petition. When we pray for a particular intention or for someone who has died, lighting a candle often provides a visible expression of our prayer. That is also why we give a donation so that it becomes "my candle" that I am offering as a sign of my prayer.



For safety reasons many churches have moved to electric votive candles. We have two electric votive candle stands to give parishioners an opportunity to "light" a candle. You simply need to touch the button in front of the candle.

We also have a votive candle stand in the shrine of *Santa Maria Vergine Annunziata* at the back of the church. It offers an opportunity to light a specially designed candle that fits into a glass holder. A donation can be placed in the box at the front of the stand.

HERITAGE SIGNS: In 2020 St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the parish. They recall historical parish buildings that once existed on the parish site: the first church (1845), the second church (1874), the presbytery (1882), the first school building (1894) and the convent (1898). The signs have been placed close to the original locations of the buildings.



The Convent was located opposite the Hall.

THE CONVENT was opened on 3 May 1898. It had been built for the Sisters of Charity by the parish with the assistance of a bequest from the estate of Fr Callaghan McCarthy.

In 1870 Fr McCarthy had been appointed the first parish priest of the newly established St Mary's Parish. He died on 1 November 1894 of injuries sustained in a train accident at Redfern.

Located in the church forecourt garden near St Mary's Villa, the Convent heritage sign stands between the original 1897 foundation stone and a second stone that records the opening of an extension in June 1921.

The sign recalls that the Sisters of Charity came to Australia from Ireland at the end of 1838 to work among the convict women. Their main concern was religious instruction and the care of the sick poor in Parramatta and Sydney. They founded St Vincent's Hospital at Darlinghurst and began teaching in schools.

By 1880 the Sisters had a community in Ashfield and at the request of Fr McCarthy they agreed to provide teachers for St Mary's School. They began teaching at Concord in January 1883.

At first, they travelled each day by train from Ashfield until a convent was built for them. It stood at the corner of Parramatta Road and Broughton Street.

The Sisters of Charity moved from the Convent in 1983 and the building was then used by the parish and the school until it was demolished in 2008. The Sisters of Charity continued to provide the leadership for St Mary's School until 1994 and a community of Sisters resided in the parish until 2014.



St Mary's Church Concord

The painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary that is the dominant image of Mary in the church is a copy of *The Immaculate Virgin of Los Venerables* painted by the Spanish artist Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1618-1682) in about 1678.

It is believed that the original painting was commissioned from Bartolomé Esteban Murillo by Justino de Neve, who was ecclesiastical president of the *Hospital de los Venerables* in Seville. He later donated it to the chapel at the hospital. The original painting is now in the Prado Museum in Madrid

The title of Immaculate Virgin reflects the belief that Mary was without sin from the first moment of her being. Although it was only officially declared a dogma of the Church in 1854, belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary had been a popular devotion in Spain since the 16th century.

In this painting Murillo combined two different iconographic traditions: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Although the Assumption of Mary was only declared to be a dogma in 1950, it too had been a popular devotion for many centuries.

The parish's copy was cleaned and restored in February 2020 to mark the Sesquicentenary of the founding of St Mary's Parish (1870-2020).

RACHEL'S VINEYARD RETREATS: offer healing and hope to women and men hurt by an abortion experience. For more information phone their confidential phone line (0400092555) or see the parish notice board or go to rachelsaus.blogspot.com If you have any questions, please email jpointo@sydneycatholic.org.

MEALS ON WHEELS: Volunteers are needed to assist with the delivery and/or packing of meals. If you can help or need more information, please contact: 9747-1135 or delivery@bcw.org.au

HOUSE OF WELCOME FOODBANK APPEAL



Foodbank provides household necessities for people seeking asylum who have limited or no income. People can access groceries on a weekly basis to alleviate the cost of living. The Foodbank program is largely stocked through the generosity of people in the community. No contribution is too small.

Contact: office@houseofwelcome.com.au
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